

REMARKS

Claims 1-6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kuramori et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,843,286B1) in view of Glinz et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,672,349B1). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection because Kuramori fails to disclose or suggest a step of pressing a circumferential wall of a tubular blank between inner and outer molding rollers to process the tubular blank into an annular shell, wherein the inner molding roller has a maximum outer diameter that is substantially the same as the inner diameter of the tubular blank.

Kuramori is directed to a tire/wheel assembly, run-flat support member and manufacturing method therefore. In the outstanding rejection on page 3, first paragraph, the Examiner asserts that Kuramori teaches pressing a circumferential wall of a tubular blank between inner and outer molding rollers. Applicants respectfully traverse this statement of the Examiner. Col. 4, lines 55-62 of Kuramori merely teach that a circular shell 4 is integrally formed by joining the side edges of two shell segments 4a, 4a. Each shell segment 4a has a single convexly curved surface on the circumferential side. When the two shell segments 4a, 4a are jointed, each of the convexly curved surfaces is aligned in an axial direction. The joint means is preferably welding when the material of the shell is metal, and fusion of adhesive is preferable when the material thereof is resin. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Kuramori fails to disclose or suggest using a tubular blank between inner and outer molding rollers to achieve the run-flat support member.

In contrast, claim 1 of the present invention calls for pressing a circumferential wall of a tubular blank between inner and outer molding rollers and rotating the inner and outer molding rollers to form at least one circumferentially continuous protruding part on the circumferential wall of the tubular blank to process the tubular blank into an annular shell. As shown in FIGs. 1-2 of the present Application, an inner molding roller 1 engages a tubular blank B, which is positioned against an outer molding roller 2 when the inner molding roller 1 and outer molding roller 2 are pressed against one another. The inner molding roller 1 also has a maximum outer diameter that is substantially the same as the tubular blank B. Since Kuramori fails to disclose or suggest the above-described pressing feature, for at least this reason the §103(a) rejection is improper, and should be withdrawn, which is respectfully requested.

Additionally, the Examiner acknowledges that Kuramori does not teach an inner molding roller having a maximum outer diameter that is substantially the same as the diameter of the tubular blank. Instead, the Examiner asserts Glinz teaches this feature because the emergency support body 1 has a ring torus 2 and support elements 3 and 4 that form a structure similar to that of the present invention. Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's assertion that Glinz teaches this feature of the present invention.

Glinz does not explicitly teach how the ring torus 2 is formed. Page 3, lines 18-23 of Glinz merely teach that a press or a roll-molding process may be utilized to form the emergency frame 1. However, no specific information regarding the rolling process is discussed. Therefore, Glinz fails to disclose or suggest any specific information regarding

the maximum outer diameter of the inner molding roller vis-à-vis the inner diameter of the tubular blank. Accordingly, assuming *arguendo* that Kuramori taught an inner molding roller, which Applicants do not concede, Applicants respectfully submit that Kuramori could not be modified by Glinz to achieve an inner molding roller having a maximum outer diameter that is substantially the same as the inner diameter of a tubular blank because Glinz fails to disclose or suggest any information regarding modification of the size of the inner molding roller. For this additional reason, withdrawal of the §103(a) rejection of claims 1-6 is respectfully requested.

For all of the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that this Application is in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney if an interview would expedite prosecution.

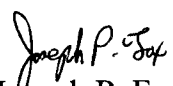
If a Petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a) for an extension of time for response is required to make the attached response timely, it is hereby petitioned under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a) for an extension of time for response in the above-identified application for the period required to make the attached response timely. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required to this Application under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 07-2069.

Respectfully submitted,

GREER, BURNS & CRAIN, LTD.

December 10, 2008
300 South Wacker Drive
Suite 2500
Chicago, Illinois 60606
Telephone:
312.360.0080
Facsimile: 312.360.9315
Customer No. 24978

By


Joseph P. Fox
Registration No. 41,760